

# The Gospel Witness

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Editor: T. T. SHIELDS.

Associate Editors: T. I. STOCKLEY, ALEXANDER THOMSON, W. GORDON BROWN.

"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ."—Romans 1:16.

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## AQUILA AND PRISCILLA

In the history of Christianity the really great characters have always been simple and humble men. If they have been conspicuous it has not been their fault. A mountain is neither proud nor boastful: it attracts attention because it is a mountain. It must not be charged against the apostles, Peter, John, Paul, and a few others, that their names are so prominent in the New Testament. The God Who made the plains and the valleys made the mountains. But you cannot have mountains without plains and valleys, and while the mountains are wonderful, but for the plains and the valleys most of us would go hungry.

Students of Scripture in too many instances are disposed to fix their attention exclusively on the great characters of the Book. But the names of humble and inconspicuous persons which the pen of Inspiration has preserved for us in the Bible represent characters which are worth studying. A man may be elevated to a position of prominence by one of the seeming accidents of life, who is essentially little in his make-up. Such an one is likely greatly to exult in his sudden distinction, and he will be likely to reveal his true calibre by taking whatever honour attaches to his position to himself exclusively, and will be offended by the slightest suggestion that anyone's powers but his own contributed to his advancement. Like a traveller in a Pullman car, being very small, he is averse to allowing his fellow-passengers to know that he needed a ladder to attain an upper berth.

It is a sign of true greatness, that a man has capacity to understand the constituents of life. Talking to the Captain of an Atlantic liner once when crossing the sea, he told us that before sailing he had visited his family in a country place in Scotland, and had heard a minister deliver a lecture on the value of a drudge to society. The Captain said he had thought much of what the minister had said. He remarked that his position required him to wear his uniform with his gold braid, and to occupy a position of prominence on the bridge, but he added, "I could not navigate this ship from port to port were it not for the army of unseen drudges who faithfully fulfil their duties below

decks." The prominence of such a man is no accident, nor is it likely to be temporary: his capacity to understand that only a small boat can be navigated by one man made him captain of a floating city. A man who insists upon doing everything himself, or, at least, who insists on taking to himself the credit for everything that is done, is not likely to be able to command the co-operation of the drudges who are indispensable to any really great achievement. The proprietor of a little one-man grocery store on the corner may afford to say, "I", and, in so doing, the first personal pronoun singular will describe his limited liability company to the end of the chapter; but no man will ever be a captain of industry, whether religious or secular, who does not delight in saying, "We".

One of the greatest men of all time, the Apostle Paul, was always generous in his recognition and acknowledgment of his indebtedness to inconspicuous persons, who, for love of Christ, laboured with him in the gospel. Among the many to whom he acknowledges his indebtedness were Aquila and Priscilla whom he mentions in his epistles to the Romans, to the Corinthians, and to Timothy. Upon these brief references, and upon what Luke says of them in the eighteenth chapter of the Acts, we are dependent chiefly for our knowledge of this worthy pair.

We have put their names together because in the Scripture they are never mentioned apart. In the truest sense, this husband and wife obviously were "no more twain but one". That, particularly in our day, is worthy of remark. Marriage is a beautiful and holy relationship; it is a type of that spiritual union of the redeemed with Christ described as "the marriage of the Lamb". In order to that marriage, men and women must be "born again", thus acquiring the very nature of Him with Whom they are then joined in an indissoluble, eternal, union. How can human marriage ever be happy when contracted between opposites—the regenerate and the unregenerate? Aquila and Priscilla were one in their common interest in Christ, and all that they accomplished together in

the name of the Lord was the result of that perfect unity of spiritual nature, of purpose, and of aim.

What terrible tragedies mar the life and ruin the usefulness of many a professed Christian in our day! How sad to hear of divorce and remarriage among professed Christians! Not always does such a calamity reflect upon both parties—except as it reflects upon the judgment of one or both.

But ought not the pulpit to be more outspoken on this matter? Not on the question of divorce only—though that is a fearful evil which seems to be everywhere on the increase—but be it remembered that countless marriages result in indescribable unhappy homes which never issue in divorce.

Our suggestion is that the pulpit ought to be more faithful in warning young people against the misery that is inevitably latent in any marriage between a believer and an unbeliever. We fear young people are nowadays permitted to drift into the assumption of the unequal yoke without a word of admonition from their spiritual guides.

Do we not all know what havoc is wrought in the church by mixed marriages? Most of the trouble which afflicted Israel in their wilderness journeyings originated with the mixed multitude which accompanied them out of Egypt. And much, if not most, of the trouble which disturbs the churches of our day may be traced to the influence in the church of unconverted wives or husbands in the church families. Let anyone study the influence of the godly home of Aquila and Priscilla upon the churches of the apostolic era, and he will see the importance of obedience to the scriptural injunction, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers."

Paul first discovered this godly pair when he came to Corinth from Athens. They seem to have been brought together by the fact that they were of the same craft: "For by their occupation they were tent-makers." Christians can, if they will, turn their occupations to account for the Lord. A particular craft will throw one into association with a particular class of persons, and if one is alert and always about the Master's business, he may find in his particular calling a special opportunity for testimony from which others, not of the same craft, are circumstantially excluded.

But their oneness in spiritual things made it possible for Aquila and Priscilla to receive Paul into their house, and the great apostle abode with them. During his activities in Corinth, Paul reasoned in the synagogue, but when he was opposed, entered into the house of one Justus. But that, we are inclined to think, was used as a teaching place instead of the synagogue, because the house of Justus "joined hard to the synagogue." It appeared that Paul continued to abide with Aquila and Priscilla as long as he remained in Corinth: "And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them."

If either Aquila or Priscilla had been unconverted it would probably have been impossible for either of them to have had the advantage of Paul's companionship in the home. How many homes are deprived of the blessing of affording hospitality to a servant of God! How many a godly woman longs to have her children brought under the influence of a faithful min-

ister by having him as a guest in her home, but is deprived of the privilege because her husband has no interest in spiritual things, and would rather entertain any one than a man of God! Or, on the other hand, a spiritual man such as I have known, who is put in bondage by the worldliness of his wife, and is not a free man even in his own house.

And what a blessing it must have been to have the Apostle Paul as a guest for eighteen months! Aquila and Priscilla thus took a very thorough theological course together. What heavenly times these three must have had together! How they must have prayed together! How eagerly this husband and wife must have given themselves to the acquisition of spiritual knowledge! What questions they asked of their great teacher! And what never-to-be-forgotten answers they received!

They abode together because they were tentmakers, they lived in their workshop, and worked where they lived. William Carey studied Greek and Hebrew, and laid the foundation of that linguistic discipline which made him one of the greatest linguists of his day, while he cobbled shoes. How Paul and Aquila and Priscilla must have talked of the things of God as they made tents! It is not altogether a disadvantage for one to earn his living by some craft which soon becomes automatic, so that the mind is at leisure for exercise in higher matters. Thus many a ploughman has learned more of God in the field than the professor among his books.

Some young people will read this who complain of the necessity of daily toil. How can one cultivate the soul while obliged to make tents, or to lay bricks, or to stoop to some other menial task? Aquila and Priscilla managed it—indeed, they worked their way through college, and had their professor as a boarder.

But the equal status of these two in all things was remarkable. They were a team rather than a tandem. Why should not husband and wife read the same books, discuss the same subjects, and keep abreast all the way along the road? How often it is otherwise! One or the other is to the fore. We have known women prominent in Christian work, of whose husbands no mention was ever made. Aquila was never known as Priscilla's husband; nor was Priscilla known chiefly as the wife of Aquila. Each was an individual. And yet they were so perfectly mated that neither was complete without the other, hence no one ever mentioned one without the other: it was always, "Aquila and Priscilla salute you", or "Greet Priscilla and Aquila."

Aquila and Priscilla evidently greatly profited by their long fellowship with Paul. They not only learned the gospel, but they learned how tactfully to present it to others. When Paul left Corinth after a residence of a year and a half, Aquila and Priscilla, accompanied him to Ephesus, and after some time he "left them there", and sailed from Ephesus en route to Jerusalem. After his departure "Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John."

Aquila and his wife went to hear the new preacher. They immediately detected his defective knowledge.

What a fine opportunity Apollos afforded these two to show off their superior knowledge! What a fine target for their critical shafts! How many preachers there are like Apollos—knowing much up to a point, “mighty in the scriptures”, but alas, “knowing only—” How many a minister has been wounded, and his usefulness locally all but destroyed, by the sharp tongues of some man or his wife, or by both, who were neither Aquila nor Priscilla! How many a young student “fervent in spirit”, loving the Scriptures if not mighty therein, and “knowing only” the first principles of the gospel, has been torn in pieces by superior people, as though he were an heretic!

The defects Priscilla and her husband discerned in the teaching of Apollos were defects of a negative order—it was what he did not know nor teach they noticed. He taught no positive error. He denied no essential of the faith. He was only imperfectly informed. His message was true as far as it went, but he knew only the baptism of John. The disciples whom Paul later found at Ephesus who had not so much as heard whether there was any Holy Ghost, having been baptized with John's baptism, may have been the fruits of the early ministry of Apollos in Ephesus. Certainly Apollos' defects were serious enough to require correction, but because it was evident that in general he was instructed in the way of the Lord, Aquila and Priscilla dealt with him wisely.

They might have boasted of their advantages in having sat at the feet of Paul. Some of the most objectionable people we have ever met have been those who boasted of having been members of a church blessed with a famous preacher for its minister. One of the worst old cranks we can remember was wont to boast that he had been baptized by C. H. Spurgeon. Great teachers cannot make scholars out of blockheads. Great universities have granted degrees to nobodies whose only qualification was memories retentive enough to enable them to pass an examination.

Apparently Aquila and Priscilla never boasted of their superior advantages. They were content to let their superior culture be known by their superior fruits. Hence it is said of Apollos, in relation to this husband and wife: “And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of the Lord more perfectly.” Not a word of criticism was passed in the synagogue. Nothing was said which could have been capitalized by the unbelieving, whether Jews or Gentiles. But Apollos was invited to their home, and there, with consummate tact, we are disposed to think, these two told the great preacher of the wonderful truths they had learned from Paul. They took their first boarder to learn from him, and their second that they might pass on what they had learned.

What a field of service this suggests! Still there are Aquilas and Priscillas qualified to teach preachers. Many a preacher can testify that he learned more from such a godly couple than he learned in college. In a couple of months, or a little more, ministerial students will be going out to begin or continue their apprenticeship to the task of being a minister. Some will be naturally abler than others—eloquent, as was Apollos; some will be more thoroughly trained than

others; some more fervent in spirit than others. But all will be alike in this, that they will “know only” a little of what a minister needs to know.

And here and there Aquila and Priscilla, hearing them, will discern their defects. What a blessing it would be to all such young men if those who were in Christ before them, and are more fully instructed Biblically, would emulate Aquila and Priscilla! They should not talk down to Apollos! Talk *with* him, and he will receive correction without knowing it.

Nothing of what we have here written is intended to advise toleration of positive error. When poison has been swallowed an antidote must be administered immediately if it is to be effective. When preachers preach positive error, be they old or young, they should be corrected frankly—and for the sake of their hearers who have been exposed to their false teaching, they should be corrected publicly, too. In what we have written we have had in mind immature and un-informed teachers, whose authority is the Scriptures, but who “know only”. These we commend to the gracious, tactful, private, and enlightening, ministry of Brother Aquila and his instructed and hospitable wife.

This article is written on a Saturday night in a hotel bedroom in West Virginia. We have nothing available for reference which anyone else has written of these two worthies—nor have we even a concordance at hand, only the Book—“Only”!—Oh, that we could all “know only” that Book!

But how full it is! We thought not very much was said about Aquila and his wife. We are sure each is deserving of a volume, but since we could not write of one without the other, we should have to write two to do them justice. But since it is now more than two hours into Sunday morning, and four services await us, we must leave much unwritten we wanted to say. Yet because we cannot leave our sketch thus incomplete we must add a few further observations.

These two had a church in their house. They had laboured with Paul in Corinth, and in his first epistle to the Corinthians Paul says, “Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church in their house.” Also in his epistle to the Romans Paul sends greetings to Aquila and Priscilla, and to “the church that is in their house”.

Many believers who read this paper in different parts of the world mourn because they have no church to attend where the word of the truth of the gospel is proclaimed. Then why not start a church in your house? These two had no money to erect a building—they were only tent-makers, and perhaps could not afford the material for a tent; but they knew enough of the gospel to instruct an Apollos, and they opened their home to him. Doubtless they taught others as they had taught him, and a church in their house was the fruit of their labours. It may not have been large numerically, but it was of sufficient importance in its spiritual influence for the greatest of all apostles to refer to it in two of his epistles.

If a church in your house is impossible, why not a Sunday School, or at least, a Bible class? It does not much matter where the Word is taught so long as it is taught, whether in a workshop, a kitchen, a parlour, a barn, or a cathedral—only let the Word be taught.

But what of the quality of these two? Were they all, or chiefly, head? Let Paul again answer: "Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus: who for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles." Perhaps it was at Corinth they saved Paul's life; but wherever it was, the apostle expresses his own thanks and the thanks of all the churches of the Gentiles. Thus the whole body of God's people, and every reader of the New Testament in all generations, are indebted to this godly husband and wife. How influential they were—and still are! May their tribe increase! Only a few apostles, only a few great leaders, but oh, how many "helpers in Christ Jesus" who are willing to "lay down their own necks", if thus the gospel may be furthered!

In the first mention of our hero and heroine in the eighteenth of Acts we learn that they had been forced to leave Rome by the command of Claudius. In the epistle to the Romans we learn they had returned to Rome, because Paul sent greetings to them there. But in Rome they had a "church in their house". The first epistle to the Corinthians was written from Philippi, and in that Paul sends greetings from Aquila and Priscilla "with the church that is in their house". They were probably within reach of Paul at Philippi. Were they then in Philippi itself? Wherever they were, it was not likely they were in Rome: Hence they must have had a church in their house in more than

one place. Why not? Had we Christians of the spiritual quality and scriptural intelligence of Aquila and Priscilla, New Testament churches would spring up everywhere.

Apollos became so mighty in the gospel that he was called an apostle, and evidently was so effective as a preacher that some people in Corinth put him before both Cephas and Paul. But all that Apollos became, he was, under God, by the good offices of Aquila and Priscilla. How did their services become known? It is not likely they divulged the secret. Almost certainly Apollos told the story, and he was so great a man that he was not ashamed to acknowledge his debt to them. At all events, the still greater man, Paul, gratefully acknowledged them as his "helpers in Christ Jesus".

If we cannot be great, we can help to make others great; we may augment our own powers by helping others of greater capacity than we. Timothy too came within the influence of the lives of these two, for in his second epistle Paul charges Timothy to "salute Prisca and Aquila."

Thus this husband and wife, humble tent-makers, were used of God to make possible the ministries of Paul and Apollos, to establish churches, and generally to be "helpers" of all who preached the gospel of God's grace. The crying need of all the churches of the day is for more members of the quality of Aquila and Priscilla.

## THE LAMB OF GOD

By Dr. T. I. Stockley, Dean of Toronto Baptist Seminary.

The first time in the Bible where the word "lamb" occurs is in Genesis, chapter twenty-two, verse seven. Abraham and Isaac were on their way to the mount of sacrifice, and Isaac asked, "My father . . . behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" That is indeed a pathetic question. The first time the word occurs in the New Testament is in John, chapter one, verse twenty-nine: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Is that a mere accident? Can it be a mere coincidence, that the first time a word occurs in the Old Testament it is found in the pathetic question, "Where is the Lamb", and the first time it occurs in the New Testament, it is a powerful exclamation, "Behold the Lamb"? Does it not rather suggest that behind the penmen of Scripture there was an all-wise controlling Mind, the mind of God? The old economy was able to produce "the fire and the wood", the symbols of judgment, but it is the New Testament which reveals to us the perfect Sacrifice. The Old Testament can even give the prophecy of the Lamb: "God will provide himself a lamb"; but the New Testament presents Him to us in the Person of Jesus, Son of man, and Son of God. All down the long ages the plaintive cry has arisen from the hearts of men, "Where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" Now the answer to that cry is heard, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

It is interesting to notice that the word "lamb" occurs thirty-one times in the New Testament, once in Acts, chapter eight; once in First Peter, chapter one, verse nineteen; twice in John's gospel; and twenty-seven times in the book of Revelation. There were two disciples who were with the Baptist when he pointed out Jesus as the Lamb of God. One was Andrew, and it is generally conceded that the other was John himself. How deeply impressive that John's first view of Christ as the Lamb of God is the view which still filled his soul so many years later when he wrote the book of Revelation! Every word in the Baptist's great message thrills us. "Behold the Lamb"!

When you are travelling from the South to the North in Palestine there is one object that allures your gaze,—it is snow-capped Hermon. This lofty mountain stands out in lonely grandeur, and more than all other objects it draws the eye toward itself. So when travelling through the Holy Land of the Word of God, there is one Object that fascinates and allures you all the time—it is the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb. Abel took of the firstlings of his flock and presented them as an offering and a sacrifice. Israel slew the appointed lamb in Egypt, and sprinkled the blood according to the Divine word, and later Israel had their morning and evening sacrifices, and their sin offering.

But Jesus is *the* Lamb. The sacrifices of the old economy all pointed onward to *the* Lamb. All the types and shadows and prophecies were pictures of Him. He is *the* Lamb, the Reality, the veritable Sacrifice, the expected One. He stands alone. There is no other, and no other is needed. His Person is of infinite worth. All that had been hoped for, and longed for is found in Him. All the Old Testament sacrifices have passed away, but *the* Lamb stands out in solitary majesty: the one Object of the soul's vision, and the One on whom all our trust should be based.

He is also the *Lamb of God*. Abraham's reply to Isaac's pathetic appeal was, "God will provide himself a lamb." Looking upon Jesus as He drew near to him, the light of heaven flashed upon the mind of John the Baptist, and he exclaimed, "Behold the *Lamb of God!*" Yes, He is wholly of God. The sin which called for such a sacrifice was wholly man's, but the Lamb of sacrifice was wholly God's. He was provided by infinite love; He was God-appointed, God-given, God-judged, God-accepted. "It pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief." "Thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin." So He was the Lamb of God in that He is the Lamb that belongs to God, that is, the Lamb which is to be offered as a Sacrifice to God: God will accept no other, but He ever accepts Him, and the soul that looks to Him. Here the Holy God and the sinner can meet. The eyes of God are ever upon Him; the Father's heart rests and rejoices in Him. He is the *Lamb of God*. Christ is thus the One to whom the sinner may look with confidence.

John says more. He says that Jesus is "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world". The first meaning of the word translated "taketh away" is "beareth". "The Lamb of God beareth the sin of the world." And what do the Scriptures teach us about bearing sin? Of course He bore sin in the sense of enduring the wickedness of men as a patient, and meek, and gentle Lamb. But that does not give us the full meaning by a long, long way. It is a well-known Old Testament word. Hark! "Whosoever curseth his God shall bear his sin." "Ye shall bear your iniquities forty years." "He is guilty, and shall bear his iniquity." These and many other words to the same effect teach us this, that to bear sin in the scriptural sense is to incur its guilt, and to suffer its penalties. So the Lamb of God becomes responsible for sin. He makes the sin His own, and bears its guilt and penalty. Oh, amazing mystery! Oh, miracle of grace! Of old the priest laid his hands upon the head of the scapegoat, and metaphorically transferred the guilt of Israel to the head of the victim. But here in awful reality God "made to meet on Him," the Lamb of God, "the iniquity of us all."

"O Christ, what burdens bowed Thy head!  
Our load was laid on Thee;  
Thou stoodest in the sinner's stead,  
Didst bear all ill for me.  
A Victim led, Thy blood was shed!  
Now there's no load for me."

The word used here for "beareth" gives the idea that Jesus was then bearing the sin of the world, and

during His earthly life was always bearing it. But the word's full meaning is that Jesus *takes away sin by bearing it*. Some teachers want us to understand that Jesus bears away sin by teaching men to live a life of virtue, and by supplying them with motives and encouragements. Thus He is gradually taking away the sin of the world. But the language here is sacrificial, and points to the victim bearing the sin which the offerer laid upon him, and bearing it away into the land of forgetfulness. The burden of sin that was laid upon Him pressed so heavily upon the world that mankind could not rid themselves of it, and could do nothing to remove it. But the Lamb of God made that burden His own, and bore it utterly away. He only can bear sin away. No flood of tears can wash our sins away. No human efforts can remove them. No sufferings of ours can atone for them. No purgatorial fires can consume them. The Lamb of God alone takes away sin, and that He does by taking its guilt, and enduring its penal consequences. His death atones. It actually removes sin. When our Lord on the cross cried, "It is finished!" the mighty work was done, and sin was borne away. Those who look to Jesus, the Lamb of God, and trust His finished work, may know that their sin is gone—borne away into "a lone place." It is cast into the depths of the sea, and no power can dredge up from the depths of merciful oblivion the sin which Christ has borne away. What a lovely truth that is!

It was no light burden that our Lord took when He bore our sin. It was the sin of the world.

One awful mass of human guilt.  
How crushing was its weight!  
How awesome the mystery!  
Oh, meaning far beyond our sight!

It is said that in a certain town in Norway there is a church, near the top of whose tower is a carved figure of a lamb. And the story of that figure is this: When the church was being built a workman fell from the high scaffold. His fellow workmen saw him fall, and horror-stricken they rushed down expecting to find him dashed to pieces. But to their astonishment and joy he was almost unhurt. This is how he escaped death—A flock of sheep and lambs was passing the church at the moment of the workman's fall, and he fell right on to a lamb! The lamb was crushed to death, but the man was saved. And so a lamb was carved on the tower at the spot from which the workman fell. And the weight of human guilt which fell upon the holy Lamb of God was so great that it crushed Him, and He died of a broken heart. Thank God the Lamb lives again, and is at the centre of the throne of glory, as the book of Revelation unveils to us.

Now we are bidden to behold Him with the eye of faith. In the year eighteen hundred and fifty-seven there was a fast day in England, and Mr. C. H. Spurgeon was to preach on that day in Crystal Palace to a congregation of about twenty-five thousand people. A day or two before the fast day Mr. Spurgeon went to the palace to decide where the platform should be placed. And in order to test the acoustic properties of the building he cried with a loud voice, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the

world." In one of the galleries a workman, who knew nothing of what was being done, heard the words, and they came like a message from heaven to his soul. Smitten with conviction of sin, he put down his tools and went home, where, after a season of spiritual struggle, he found peace by beholding the Lamb of God.

And what is it to "behold"? Some years since I was asked to visit a dying man who was supposed to have skeptical notions. I was warned of this before I entered his bedroom; but brushing the warning words aside, I sat by his bedside, and soon began to talk to him of Jesus and His power to save. Among other things I said, "You are very weak and ill, too weak to attend to a great business if you had one. Now suppose you had such a business, and a friend of yours, a man of great business ability, absolutely trustworthy, came to you and said, 'As attending to your business is now beyond your power, will you let me attend to it for you? Will you *look to me* to do it? I pledge my word that I will look after your interests faithfully.'" Without my attempting to apply the illustration, the man said, "Is that it?" I said, "Yes, that is it. The matter of your salvation is altogether too great for you to carry through, and our great Saviour says, 'Will you look to Me to carry it through for you? Will you?' Immediately he replied, 'Certainly I will.' And will the reader do the same?"

The Lamb of God meets every sinner's case. A man was being carried on a stretcher into a London hospital some years since. At the entrance he called a halt, and began to sing:

"Happy if with my latest breath,  
I may but gasp His name;  
Preach Him to all, and cry in death,  
'Behold, behold the Lamb!'"

In the crowd there was a navvy, whose heart was pierced with the message, and won for Christ. He pointed hundreds of others to Jesus. Let every reader gaze upon the Lamb of God, with a look of whole-hearted trust, and then go forth to bid others "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world!"

### WHEN MERCY SEASONS JUSTICE.

By Olive L. Clark, M.A.

The prophet Habakkuk prayed, "O Lord, I have heard Thy speech, and was afraid: O Lord, revive Thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy." Immediately after he had uttered this prayer the seer had a vision of God, the Holy One, Whose glory covered the heavens and whose brightness was as the light, coming to earth, riding upon "the horses and chariots of salvation". To His own people His coming was a coming for salvation, but to His enemies His coming was a coming of judgment, for the prophet says, "Thou didst march through the land in indignation, thou didst thresh the heathen in anger. Thou wentest forth for the salvation of Thy people,

even for salvation with Thine Anointed." To some He came in mercy, to others He came in justice.

D. L. Moody records the following incident. Dr. Arnot was accustomed to tell a story of a poor woman who was in great distress because she could not pay her landlord his rent. The doctor put some money in his pocket, and went to her house, intending to help her. He knocked at the door. He thought he heard some movement inside; but no one came to open the door. He knocked louder and louder still; but yet no one came. At last he went away, thinking his ears must have deceived him, and that there was really no one there. A day or two afterward he met the woman in the street, and told her what had happened. She held up her hands and exclaimed: "Was that you? I was in the house all the while; but I thought it was the landlord, and I had the door locked!"

Many people think the grace of God is coming to smite them, whereas it comes to pay all our debts!

After Adam and Eve sinned they stood before God in their sin and shame, listening to the sentence of death. But before they were driven from the garden, God Himself provided a covering for them, the coats of skins from the animals slain for their redemption. The grace of God saw that they were covered by the blood before they should be exiled from the garden wherein was the tree of life.

This principle of God's wondrous love for sinful humanity which prompts Him to refuse to bring condemnation upon them for sin until they have spurned His way of escape, finds abundant illustration in both the Old Testament and the New. Let us notice some of these instances.

Wickedness abounded in the earth, and lest evil should go on increasing from generation to generation, God purposed to destroy all flesh by a flood of water. To Noah, who "found grace in the eyes of the Lord", God gave directions for the building of an ark which would be "for the saving of his house." As Noah built the ark he preached to the people, telling them of their sin, of the coming of judgment, and of the divine plan for their escape. After a period of one hundred and twenty years, "when the longsuffering of God waited", the day came for Noah to enter the ark. Only eight souls were saved: these were the only ones who had hearkened to the message of salvation. We are told that Noah "condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith". The people had mocked and jeered at his earnest plea, refusing the overtures of grace, till finally they were overwhelmed in the waters of judgment. They were offered grace before justice, salvation before condemnation; but they refused grace and salvation, and consequently had to accept justice and condemnation.

What a privilege was given to the cities of Galilee—to Bethsaida, the home of Philip the faithful disciple; to Capernaum, the scene of many miracles, where Christ Himself dwelt, in whose synagogue He often preached. They were indeed a people sitting in darkness to whom the great Light of the world came, but they chose to remain in the darkness. They marvelled at His words, Who taught them "as one having authority"; but they would not yield to His authority. They crowded around Him as He healed their sick,

while they continued to ignore these signs of His deity. His testimony became to them "a savour of death unto death".

Sad indeed is the pronouncement of doom upon these cities who scorned the One Who came that they might have life and peace. "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day."

The same is true of Jerusalem: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." Grace Incarnate, God's Grace, dwelling among men, was spurned, despised, and rejected.

We marvel at the forbearance and long-suffering of our God, Who "hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities." We deserve death, but He gives us pardon and life. The quaint words of Leighton are most suggestive: "It is grace alone, the most free grace of God, that contrives and offers, and makes the peace, else it never had been; we had universally perished without it. Now in this consists the wonder of Divine grace, that the Almighty seeks agreement and entreats for it, with sinful clay, which He could wholly destroy in a moment."

The implications of this principle of the Gospel are many. In the first place, "heaven is not a chance, but a choice." God has revealed to us in the Scriptures that it is His will we should be saved, and not lost. Ezekiel as the watchman of Israel declared to the people the will of God: "Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked: but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways: for why will ye die, O house of Israel." If they die, it is because they themselves *will* to die, because they chose death when God offers them life. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him *should not perish*, but have everlasting life."

In the second place, since God has made ample provision for us to be saved through His Son, upon Whom all our sins were laid, the One Who bore the penalty of our sin, all who are lost are lost on the ground of their rejection of His merciful salvation. "He that believeth on Him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, *because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God*. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and *men loved darkness rather than light*, because their deeds are evil."

The *sin* question has been settled: it is the *Son* question now. Christ came that we might be saved, and

those who are lost are without excuse. God has revealed to men the truth about Himself, about their lost condition, about redemption through the blood of the heavenly Lamb; and when that revelation of His grace and mercy is repudiated, judgment deservedly falls on the guilty sinner. "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal Power and Godhead; *so that they are without excuse*."

Surely "the judgment of God is according to truth", and though many to-day are saying that God is too good to damn any one, and thus continue in their wicked ways, presuming on His love, they will find out some day that it does not pay to trample under foot the blood of Christ, doing despite unto the God of grace. The warning is most solemn, "Despisest thou the riches of His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God." The one who counts the mercy of God as something to be despised and spurned is but hoarding up woe and anguish for himself. God sent His Son to save us from eternal damnation; and whoever goes to hell, goes there stumbling, as it were, over the crucified body of the Son of God.

Again: the Lord Jesus Christ who came to this earth once as our Saviour will come again some day as Judge. The day of grace will end, and the night of judgment begin. Yet we know that the reason He has delayed His coming thus far is that He waits for some lost one to return home: "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." May those who are unsaved hasten while the door of God's mercy is open lest the Bridegroom should come for His own, and that door be shut against them!

#### LAST WEEK IN JARVIS STREET.

Last Sunday Jarvis Street people enjoyed much of the blessing of the Lord. There were 1,335 present at the Bible School, nearly three hundred of whom were in the Pastor's Class which was taught by Rev. H. G. Hamilton, of Austin, Minn., who also preached morning and evening. One professed salvation following the morning service, and three signified their desire for baptism in the after meeting.

What a time of warm fellowship we have had with this valiant Fundamentalist of Minnesota during the eight days of his stay in Jarvis Street! How his life radiates the gospel he preaches! How he carries wherever he goes the blessing of God that maketh rich and addeth no sorrow thereto! How he exemplifies the saving grace of our God! Mr. Hamilton will ever be a welcome visitor at Jarvis Street, and his work followed with much interest and prayer by the host of friends he made here.

# The Jarvis Street Pulpit

## THE HAND AND THE EAR OF GOD.

A Sermon by the Pastor, Dr. T. T. Shields.

Preached in Jarvis Street Church, Toronto, Sunday Morning, April 7th, 1929.

(Stenographically Reported)

"Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear:

"But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you that he will not hear."—Isaiah 59:1, 2.

Isaiah prophesied at a time when the religious consciousness of the people had become very faint, when God seemed to be far off, when the resources of Deity had ceased to be reckoned as possible human assets. But the prophet declares that though the sun is obscured, it is not obliterated; though the Lord's hand is withdrawn, it is not withered; and though there be no prayer uprising to the throne, the throne remains. It is possible for God's people at any time to lose in some measure the consciousness of the Divine Presence. It is possible that a distance may separate even the Lord's own people from Him. They may lose their fellowship with Him, and lose the joy of their salvation.

At such a time we are disposed to find some explanation of the changed condition apart from the true facts of the case. There was a time when we cherished very high ideals. We failed to realize them—and then sought to persuade ourselves that these ideals of our earlier Christian life were after all impractical and were but vain fancies. I cannot tell how many ministers I have met who seemed to look almost cynically upon the enthusiasm of young believers, as though they would say, "Once of a day I had such an experience myself, but I have grown older, I have obtained a fuller knowledge of life, I am not carried away as once I was with the enthusiasm of youth."

Are you sure that your ideals were impossible of realization? Are you quite certain that those mountain summits, which once you were ambitious to scale, are really inaccessible after all? Are you certain that the principles which you have laid aside were really an embarrassment and a burden to you? Life may have changed. Friends have departed; circumstances have altered; sometimes we feel as though we were living in a different world. But what has effected the change? The boatman sitting yonder in his boat may see the receding shore and diminishing hills as though the earth were drifting away from him, but the truth is it is he who is drifting; the change is in him. We are being told to-day about the requirements of our time, about the larger view of the modern mind, the broader charity which men have come to entertain, and that we are not to expect miracles to-day, we are not to look for great revivals to-day, we are not to expect a repetition of the record of the Acts of the Apostles in our day. That was all right for the first century, but things have greatly changed!

But the truth is in the text, "Behold the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save." There is no change in Him. He is the same yesterday, to-day, and

for ever. His ear is not heavy; He has not grown old; His hearing is as acute as ever it was. He is still able to hear the prayer of the faithful. He is still able to answer the cry of His believing people. If there be any change at all, as change there is, let it be written down as axiomatic that there is never any change in God. One by inspiration long ago said, "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting thou art God."

There has come over the church of recent years, even among orthodox people, an assumption that God does change, that He deals with His people in one way at one time, and in another way at some other time. That is not true. It has always been true of Him that He is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look upon iniquity. No man was ever saved by the blood of bulls and of goats. These things were but typical of that great Sacrifice offered on Calvary, and by virtue of the merit of Whom alone any soul has ever been permitted to come into the Divine Presence. God is always the same. The first human soul was saved on exactly the same principles as we are saved, and the last soul that ever shall be redeemed will be saved exactly as you and I are saved. God is always the same: His hand is not shortened, nor is His ear heavy.

### I.

Now let us turn over that simple and yet profound statement respecting the immutable, the undiminished, power of our glorious God. He is always the same. God is just as well able to save men amid untoward circumstances to-day as He ever was. We have come to imagine that some preparation must needs be made for the gospel. There are some who would send the legislator in advance of the evangelist, and there are others who imagine the schoolmaster will make a good substitute for the gospel preacher! But the truth is, the gospel has always triumphed amid the same difficult circumstances, because there never have been such circumstances that God was not superior to them.

I remember during the war speaking out at Exhibition Camp—or being asked to speak, under the auspices of the Y.M.C.A. It was in one of those large buildings, and a great crowd of men were assembled. When I got to the place I did not know what was inside, whether it was a fire or what it was; it was so full of smoke I could hardly see anyone. The Y.M.C.A. Secretary said, "We have a moving picture exhibition first to get the men in, and when we get the place full

we will call on you to give us a ten-minute snappy address"—whatever that may be. It was my first experience of that sort. They put on their moving picture exhibition, and then asked me to speak. I said, "It is no use for me to try to speak. God is not in this place, and I am not accustomed to entering with my Master through the back door. I will come again some time if you want me to, but you announce that I will preach the gospel. If one comes, I will be thankful for the opportunity of preaching to one; but I am not going to travel under false pretences, or have my Lord Jesus play second to a moving picture machine."

There are churches in this city who imagine that if you are to interest men and women, and particularly young people, you must first of all catch them with something other than the gospel, and prepare the way so that the gospel may find men in comparatively favourable circumstances, and then it will have a chance to work. Let us get back to the simplicity of Scripture, that men are saved by the outstretched hand of God, and that He is not only equal but superior to all circumstances. I turn over in my mind again and again that scripture which commissioned the disciples to begin at Jerusalem. I remember when we were passing through a great crisis in this church, how that text came to me with a new message, and I asked this question: What was Jerusalem to these early disciples? What did it represent? It represented the scene of their Master's greatest humiliation. It represented the city where hell itself had been let loose; it represented the place where even Jesus Christ Himself had seemed to be impotent. It was the city where the powers of darkness apparently had accomplished their greatest victory. Jerusalem was the place in which human sin had digged a grave for Deity, and had buried the Incarnate God out of its sight. But our Lord said to them, "I command you to begin your work in the most difficult spot in all the universe. Begin at Jerusalem, and in the very city where I was crucified the gospel shall win its first glorious victory."

"The Lord's hand is not shortened." He is the same to-day. Read the record of these cities in which our Lord won His triumph. Was Corinth, with all its licentiousness, an easy place in which to preach the gospel? Is it not a wonder that the apostles did not send some moral reformers in advance, in order to clean up the city to make it possible for people to hear the gospel? Not at all. He preached the gospel in that cesspool of iniquity; and there, as in other places, it triumphed. In Athens, the city of culture, of cold frigid intellectualism, Paul preached the gospel only. Call the roll of the cities: Thessalonica, Antioch, Ephesus, Rome itself, and the Lord wrought in these places great victories. The truth is, God is just as mighty in Toronto as ever He was in Jerusalem, and He Who is the Head of the church has said, "All authority is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore." And He is as well able to defend His cause and to subdue and put to rout the enemies of the truth to-day as He ever was in days gone by.

The Lord has the same power to save rebellious men to-day. Go to our professional Sunday School meetings and hear what all the Sunday School leaders tell you. They will tell you that if you want to save men and women you must save the boys and girls.

Well, we believe that. We believe the earlier we can get one to come to Christ the better; but if we are to depopulate the far country, they say we must catch them when they are very young, for it is not much use to expect people who have grown old in sin to be converted! I do not know how often I have heard men in time past put a question like this to a congregation, "How many of you were converted before you were ten years of age? How many before fifteen?—twenty-one—thirty—forty—fifty? And the assumption is that when a man gets past fifty there is not much chance for him. I grant you that he is hardened in sin, that is all true: but too generally there is now-a-days no recognition of the fact that God, who made the world and all things therein, can come into a human life at any hour of the day. By all means let us seek to bring people to Christ when they are young, but let us not despair of any one. There never was a heart more impervious to the truth, there never was a soul more strongly fortified against the gospel, than was Saul of Tarsus. He was the despair of the whole church, but he was not the despair of the Lord of heaven. He let the Light which is above the light of the sun shine into that darkened mind, and the scales fell from his eyes, and he became the willing captive of the Lord Jesus Christ. No matter how difficult the case is, the Lord's hand is not shortened that He cannot save.

There are some young people here who imagine that their present situation is more trying than that of almost any other situation imaginable. "Ah," says a young man, "you do not know the temptations I have." Some young girl says, "You do not know how difficult it is to bear witness for Christ. We are living in an age when everything is unfavourable to the progress of the gospel, and when people are antagonistic toward the things of Christ. And sometimes I wonder whether it is possible in my circumstances to be what the Bible requires of all who believe." My friends, the Lord is just as well able to save you in a difficult situation as He has ever been able to save His saints in time past. It was not easy for Noah in his day, when he had to stand practically alone against the world; and yet God saved him. It was not easy for Lot—He was a half-hearted sort of servant of God, and he had no business in Sodom at all. And yet, strangely enough, the New Testament tells us he "vexed his righteous soul". The argument is this, that if God could save then, if God could save Lot in Sodom and out of Sodom, He can save anyone—and so He can. And He can make you grow among the ungodly down there in the office if you will only look to Him. His hand is not shortened that He cannot save.

Then, my brethren, I should like to apply that to the church. There have been days of glorious revival in the past. I frankly say that I want to dissociate myself absolutely from people who declare that the days of revival are past. I confess myself a premillennarian, but there is a brand of premillennarianism in which I have no interest, and which is utterly dishonouring to God and to the gospel of the Son of God. The idea that light has lost its power to dispel the darkness, that God cannot save by the hundreds, by the thousands, or by the millions if He will to-day, has no scriptural warrant. We see souls saved here, and it is my

comfort that so long as I can see one person really regenerated by the power of the Spirit of God I know the Spirit of God is still with us ("Amen!") If He can save one, He can save a hundred; if He can save a hundred, He can save a thousand; and if a thousand, a million. I cannot find in God's Book any reason for refusing to believe in the possibility of our witnessing in our day revivals as great, or greater, than the world has ever seen. ("Amen!") "The Lord's hand is not shortened." Be done with that conception of things which is so dishonouring to God as to assume that it is no longer possible for God to bring the multitudes into His kingdom.

Well, let me get at the hearts of some of you who are Christians. Did you ever have a better time than you are having now? Some of you did. Ah yes, there is a man here who says, "There was a time, sir, when I was conscious of the throb of spiritual power in my own life. There was a time when I was able to ride upon my high places. There was a time when, by divine grace, I was enabled to live victoriously to the honour and praise of God. But I have grown older, and I fear I am confirmed in my habits. I do not read my Bible as once I did. I do not find the same delight in it, nor do I find the same rapture of soul when I pray. I look to the past wistfully and say, 'Oh that it were with me as in months past, when the candle of the Lord shined upon me,—

'Where is the blessedness I knew  
When first I saw the Lord?  
Where is the soul-refreshing view  
Of Jesus and His Word?'"

I remind you, my brethren, that faith has no right to write the miracles of grace, either in the history of the church or in the individual life, in the past tense. God is just as able to give you complete victory this morning as He ever was. He is just as able to bring into your life that full and abounding and overflowing blessing of which you were once the recipient, as He ever was. There is no reason in God why you should not become at this hour a better Christian than you ever have been before. There is no reason why you should not have a fuller joy, a greater power, than you have ever experienced in all the years of the past. Is it not glorious that we have a God Whose strength does not wane, Whose power never diminishes? If it be so that you have missed anything of the blessing of the Christian life, will you not recognize this morning that the reason for it is never in God; it is always somewhere else.

## II.

The ear of the Lord is just as acute as it ever was. I know there are those who tell us that it is folly to pray, that the laws of God are fixed, and that you cannot change them by all your petitioning. I remember my friend Dr. Norris from this pulpit giving an illustration some years ago, saying that when he was about to leave Fort Worth for Toronto he enquired of the railway agent when the trains left, and found there was no train leaving late enough of a Sunday night to permit him to take his evening service and leave after the service and arrive in Toronto on time. So he talked it over with the agent, and asked, "Is there no way out? I cannot leave until after the evening ser-

vice." He said, "I do not know: I will wire Chicago and will let you know." The agent wired Chicago, and a little while after he called Dr. Norris up and said, "I have orders from the General Superintendent to hold that train till you get through your service." It was a fast train, and it meant holding it an hour and a half beyond its scheduled time. The train came into Fort Worth—and stayed there an hour and a half. People wondered why until the preacher with his bag came down the steps, and the conductor recognized him and put him on the train and said, "All aboard", and off they went. Yet that train pulled into Chicago exactly on time. It started an hour and a half late—but it arrived on time.

If the management of a great railway system can so adjust his schedule as to wait for the accommodation of one who needed another hour and a half, the Lord can make the sun stand still if He wants to. He can suspend His laws, He can adjust His schedules, and yet be always on time. The ear of the Lord is not heavy. You can still pray to Him; He still hears your prayer. And when you have prayed, His hand is not shortened; He can answer the cry of His believing people.

That is true in respect to this church. We have had times of blessing here, and I trust we are not unthankful for what God has done for us. We have just concluded another year, in which we have seen much of the mercy of God. We have seen many souls saved, but not as many as we ought to have seen. We ought to be filled always with a holy dissatisfaction, always eager for greater blessing than we have ever had before. But how wonderfully God has answered our prayer in this place!

There are some of you here who remember—and I think I ought to keep you in remembrance of it, I think we should sin against God were we to allow ourselves to forget, when we were delivered out of Egypt. I met a man down in Houston, Texas, three or four years ago. He came up to me at the close of a meeting and said, "Are you Dr. Shields of Toronto?" I said, "Yes." "You are the Pastor of Jarvis St. Church?" I said, "Yes." "Oh," he said, "I am so glad to meet you. I was in Toronto in September of nineteen hundred and twenty-one, staying at the King Edward Hotel." He introduced himself as Judge So-and-So. I do not know what kind of judge he was, but he seemed to be a man of weight. And he said, "I was staying at the King Edward Hotel. I am a Baptist, and I heard of your great trial up there, of the business meeting you were going to have, and I was curious about it. So I went up, and not being a member of the church, I went up to the gallery, thinking I might be permitted to stay there as a spectator. Presently the Chair ordered all who were not members to withdraw. I did not go out, I just lay on my face under one of the seats in the gallery of your church, and as the meeting proceeded, when no one was looking I got up and looked over, and I saw and heard what was going on." He held me by the hand warmly and said, "I have seen a great deal of the power of God, but never in all my life have I ever seen any manifestation of supernaturalism equal to what I witnessed in your church that night."

God came in and did what no human power could ever have accomplished. He made bare His arm. I

never knew what that verse meant until that night. Have you ever seen a man roll up his sleeve for work? I saw God that night roll up His sleeve. I saw the closed fist of Deity strike for our deliverance. And any blessing that we have ever had here from that day to this has never been due to the pastor's ministry, nor the ministry of the deacons, nor the church, nor the Sunday School primarily: God has been pleased in some humble way to use us, but any blessing that has ever come to this church has come because God in mercy and in infinite grace, and for His own glory's sake, made bare His arm. I am here in His name to tell you that the hand of the Lord is not shortened. What He did then He can do now.

He heard our prayer then. I remember when I was shut in for six weeks with-scarlet fever, and as soon as I was able to speak over the telephone I got a daily report, and people told me of the prayer meetings being held three times a week just the same. I said to them—I don't know how often—"Well, what was Brother Greenway's text at the prayer meeting?" And they said, "Just the same." "The same as last meeting?" "Yes." And do you know what it was for nearly two months when the pastor was in quarantine; when we were beset by the bitterest opposition that ever assailed a church; when, as one influential man told me, we had wealth and social prestige and organization against us, and the pastor a prisoner,—do you know what Deacon Greenway's one text was day after day, week after week? "Have faith in God."

Shall we not return with full purpose of heart to the Lord if we have wandered? Will you not take the prayer ministry of the church upon your heart afresh this morning? Is it so, that God is still willing to hear the cry of His people? And have we not interest enough to call upon Him? How terrible that would be! "Behold the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear." He can hear you now, and if we would but pray as we ought to do, as God expects us to do, I believe that even yet from this place might go forth a revival that would sweep the whole continent of America. There is no reason why it should not be so.

"His ear is not heavy." Someone told me that once in a great service in the Tabernacle they heard Spurgeon pray, and he began his prayer like this: "Bow down thine ear, O Lord, and hear us, for we are poor and needy. Bow down Thine ear just a little closer, Lord, so that we may whisper to Thee." How near He is! And He is ready to come so close to us that He can hear the faintest whisper. Indeed He can, and He can interpret and answer the unexpressed desire. The ear of the Lord is not heavy.

### III.

"Well," you say, "that is not true to my personal experience." If it is not, shall I tell you why? Communication by wire and by rail and by road the last few days has become disorganized, demoralized; it has been scarcely possible to get anywhere because of the storm. But sometimes on a perfectly clear day, when there is no storm at all, you have seen the power go off so that the cars could not move, or you have taken down the telephone, have waited for an answer, waited for someone to say, "Number, please." But no answer came. You took it down again and

waited, and waited, and waited, and at last you found the thing was out of order, you could not get through. It requires an expert sometimes to discover just what is the matter, where the break in the communication is. Our prophet says that if your telephone is not working it is not because there is trouble at the far end. If the power is not coming through to you, it is not because there is any diminution of power with God. The transmission of power is always a problem of insulation. I suppose there is no reason why the power of Niagara should not be carried around the world, if only it could be sufficiently insulated so that there should be no leak at all.

That is so in the believer's life. There is power enough with God, His hand is not shortened; and if there is no power in our lives it is because there is a ground wire somewhere, there is a break in the service, there is some connection with earth, the insulation is not complete. If you get no answer to prayer, it is not because God cannot hear—and perhaps not because you cannot speak. This is the explanation: "But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear." I do not know what the particular hindrance is, but if there is any loss of blessing in any life this morning, the diagnosis is very simple: it is sin that separates us from God, some act of disobedience, some neglect of duty, some positive transgression, some unwillingness to obey His command.

Some of you here this morning have lost much blessing because you would not be baptized. "Why," you say, "do you mean to say, sir, that there is so much in baptism?" I will tell you what there is in baptism: it is a command of God, and the man who believes in Christ, and has never been baptized, is disobedient, I don't care who you are. You are disobedient, you are not obeying God, and you had better get right with Him.

Some of you have failed to witness for Him, and you have lost the power and blessing in that way. Shall we this morning yield ourselves afresh to Him? I wonder how many unconverted people there are here this morning, how many of you boys and girls have not yet yielded yourselves to Christ, you are not saved? Would you like to be? God has power to save you as well as He has had to save the rest of us. His hand is not shortened. "But how shall I be saved?" "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." You say, "Will He hear me if I call?" Yes, He will; His ear is not heavy that He cannot hear. One prayed in the temple, "God be merciful to me a sinner", and he was saved there and then. And you can be saved, everyone. "Oh but," you say, "I have put this off for twenty years." I think some of you here can say this morning, "I have heard you preach for nineteen years or thereabouts, and I am not saved yet. I used to be more moved than I am now. I come now as a matter of duty, as a matter of interest too; but I am not moved as once I was, and I fear I have put it off too long." I am sorry you have so long delayed, but I tell you the Saviour I preach is just as able to save you to-day as He was nineteen years ago. He can save you here and now in your pew, before you leave this service.

You have only to let your heart cry out to God, "God be merciful to me a sinner", and His answer will flash like lightning to your soul, and you may be a new creature and go from this place leaning upon the arm of our Beloved.

What a mighty arm He has! Will you trust Him? Will you look to Him this morning?

Let us pray together that He may help us: We thank Thee, O Lord, that Thou art with us still, and that the exceeding greatness of Thy power is still to usward who believe, and that it is still the power of resurrection that is the measure of it according to the working of Thy mighty power which was wrought in Christ when Thou didst raise Him from the dead. We pray that there may be direct dealing with God this morning. Hear us for any of Thy children who have been losing in some measure the blessing, and who have become conscious of a growing distance between themselves and Christ. O Lord, may that cease this morning. Bring every such one back into complete fellowship and harmony with Thyself. Thou hast said to us who are Thy children that if we confess our sins, thou art faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness; therefore we pray that every backslider, even though it be but the backsliding of heart, and there be no open sin—we pray that every backslider just now may lift his heart or her heart to God and say, "Lord, I am coming back home. Return unto thy rest, Oh my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with me."

Is there one who has failed in duty, who has resigned his task, who has given up the burden that Thou didst put upon his back, and has not found rest by doing so, but only increasing weariness, bring that one back to the place of obedience and of duty this morning.

We pray for these boys and girls. How we long to see them saved, held in the hand of Almighty God! Bring them to Thyself this morning. O Lord, for every boy we pray, for every unsaved boy here this morning. Speak to him this minute, O Spirit of God, and help him to cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner". For every unsaved girl we pray, we covet them for the Lord; open their hearts as Thou didst open the heart of Lydia, and may Jesus Christ take complete possession to-day.

We pray for any of Thy children who have not obeyed Thee in the ordinance which Thou hast commanded; they have been postponing their obedience and losing blessing by their tardiness. Bring them to decision this morning that they may resolve to do Thy holy will.

Then we pray for husbands and fathers. Lord, if there be such an one who is unsaved here this morning, suffer him not to leave this place until he has felt the touch of the hand of God. If there be an unsaved mother here this morning, one to whom Thou hast given the priceless treasure of other human lives to care for for Thee, if there be one such who is without Christ, we pray that Thou wilt save that mother this morning. Bless us all. How else shall we pray, except to ask that Thou wilt put Thine arms about this entire congregation. Let no one miss Thy benediction. May Thine own dear children be seized with a passion for the salvation of souls. Even as the invitation is given this morning, when an opportunity

is afforded for confession, we pray that every believing heart may be occupied with prayer, petitioning the ear of God that the hand of God may be moved in salvation. We ask it in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

#### "GOSPEL WITNESS" NEWS.

We have received much interesting mail in response to Dr. Shields' appeal to *The Witness* family for gifts for general *Witness* work, and we share some of it with our readers in the hope that it will inspire further gifts.

The following letter came from Montreal, and tells of blessing received through *The Witness* pages:

Montreal,  
February, 20th, 1930.

Dear Dr. Shields:

I am glad to send you the enclosed as a contribution to *The Gospel Witness* Fund. I am very sorry indeed that there is not more available at the moment. Shall try during the next few months to send along some more. I could not begin to pay you for the blessing your messages have brought to me. I hope that many who have means will send you enough to enable you to put *The Witness* in the hands of many who need the messages though unable to pay for it. May God's blessing be on your good work!

Yours sincerely,  
(Sgd.) \_\_\_\_\_

There is not a state in the Union to which *The Gospel Witness* does not go, and among our most appreciative readers are many Americans. The following letter, with a generous gift, reached us yesterday from Chicago:

Chicago, Ill.,  
February 22nd, 1930.

Dear Dr. Shields:

Permit me to thank you for *The Gospel Witness*. Its uncompromising stand for the gospel of the grace of God is a source of profound inspiration and gratification to me. It has become a part of my life.

In these days of apostacy when the air is filled with countless substitutes for the only gospel which alone is able to save, one cannot help but thank God for the Editor of *The Gospel Witness* whose courage is like that which characterized the early apostles, and who is "not ashamed of the gospel of Christ".

The testimony of *The Gospel Witness* is in these perilous days, "a rock in a weary land, a shelter in a time of storm." God bless the Editor of *The Gospel Witness*, and keep his sword sharp in his battle with Modernism—the enemy of our souls, is my sincere prayer.

Gratefully yours,  
(Sgd.) \_\_\_\_\_

We were particularly touched by the letter which follows, and could not refrain a prayer that God would move some of His children to send us gifts that would enable us to send *The Witness* weekly to isolated places whose chief communication with the world is through the radio that seems to be largely under the control of "the prince of the power of the air". We long to send the paper to mining camps, lumber camps, farming communities and Sunday Schools throughout the Western prairies, and to shut-ins throughout the world. Following is an excerpt from the letter:

Ontario,  
February 22nd, 1930.

Dear Dr. Shields:

Some time ago I came to reside with my son who is employed in the production of pulp wood for a firm

whose headquarters for the labourers is in the woods on the C.N.R. line. *The Gospel Witness* came to me there through my daughter, and was like the "voice of one crying in the wilderness". We had no church to go to nearer than \_\_\_\_\_, a hundred miles distant, so we read the sermons every Sunday. What a blessing they are to everyone!

Then from Scotland has come a call from a shut-in for *The Witness*. She received a few copies from a friend, and, liking "the sample", has written for more. We could circle the globe with the gospel as it is set forth in the printed sermons if only means were at our disposal to do so. Hear what this saint of God has to say of the first copies that reached her, in the following extract from her letter:

Dear Dr. Shields: \_\_\_\_\_, Glasgow, Scotland.

I feel constrained to write you. There has been put into my hands a few copies of *The Gospel Witness*—back numbers, given me by a friend who gets them from a friend in Toronto. I got them, as we sometimes say, "by accident", but I believe they were God-sent. When reading these sermons I feel like Paul must have felt when caught up to the third heaven. God bless you for the messages; especially the one entitled, "The Spirit and the bride say, Come" . . . I trust you may long be spared to deliver such a gospel to a dark world.

(Sgd.) \_\_\_\_\_

Here is an appeal from a Baptist minister of Illinois that we are sure our readers will not disregard. How many such letters we get in the course of a year! And none have been allowed to go without the paper. That is why we need your help now. Who will have the joy of being responsible for sending *The Witness* for 1930 to this soldier of the Cross? His letter follows:

Dr. T. T. Shields,  
130 Gerrard St. East,  
Toronto, Canada.

Dear Brother Shields:

My subscription to *The Gospel Witness* will expire in a few weeks, and with much sorrow I am compelled to ask you kindly to discontinue sending the paper to my address when the expiration date arrives.

I have always greatly enjoyed reading every page of the paper since I became a subscriber. It has been a blessing to my soul and life, and I shall ever entertain the hope of sometime being able to renew my subscription.

I especially admire and praise God for your stand against all forms of Modernism, and may the Lord bless you and grant you many more years earnestly to contend for the faith. I am,

Your fellow-servant (Baptist) in Christ,

We should like to share many other letters had we space to do so. We must make one further appeal. One of the students of the Toronto Baptist Seminary came to the office this week saying she had just returned from visiting an Old Ladies' Home in the city where an inmate asked her if they might not have *The Witness* weekly by mail at the home. This lady had for some time received the paper regularly through a friend, and it had been her custom to gather the inmates of the institution who lived in her building together each Sunday evening and read the sermon from *The Witness*. Since it had failed to reach them they had been without a gospel message, and

this lady asked most earnestly that *The Witness* be sent from the office, that they might resume their custom and get some spiritual uplift and help.

Hearts are everywhere hungry for the truth. If the Lord's stewards would make it possible, we would send the paper to hospitals, homes, sanitariums, reformatories, prisons, as well as to individuals—every place where unsaved men and women are in need of the gospel, or Christians long for food for their souls. Will you not send your gift to *The Witness* office at once—and make it a generous one?

#### THE PASTOR AT HOME.

Dr. Shields, who has been in Clarksburg, West Virginia, conducting evangelistic meetings in the Baptist Church, of which Dr. Gabriel R. Maguire is Pastor, will be home in time for the Saturday evening prayer service. He will teach his class at 9.45 Sunday morning, and preach at both services.

Dr. Shields will give an account of the meetings in Clarksburg in next week's issue of *The Witness*.

The Regular Monthly Communion Service will be held at the close of the evening service Sunday, March 2nd. Every member of the church who can possibly do so is urged to be present. Owing to the Pastor's absence he will not write the members, and they are asked to accept this notice as a warm invitation to be present. New members will be received into church fellowship.

#### JAMAICA BAPTIST MISSION—IMPORTANT.

By the kind permission of the Editor of *The Gospel Witness*, the writer is able to publish the following statement.

It has come to my knowledge that Rev. H. W. Uffelin is still, or has been very recently, travelling in the United States as a "Field Representative" of the Jamaica Baptist Mission. It is well that all Fundamentalist churches in the United States should know that Mr. Uffelin has no official connection whatever with the above Mission.

Some months since letters came from the Committee of the Mission to the writer containing these statements: "We have cut off connection with Mr. Uffelin, and do not wish him either to appear to represent us, or to make any appeal on our behalf. This information is being sent to Mr. Uffelin and to his Committee in New York. Further, the presence of Mr. Uffelin in Jamaica again will not be welcome." As Mr. Uffelin has been spreading through America grave charges of Modernism amongst the workers in Jamaica, the Jamaica Committee "challenge Mr. Uffelin to name one single missionary aided by funds which come from United States who can in any sense be termed a Modernist." And the following pledge is given to those who have contributed to the Jamaica Baptist Mission:

"That no contribution which may be sent to us from the United States will ever be used in aiding any church, or churches, whose missionary is known to possess Modernistic views."

It was certainly disappointing enough that of all the money collected by Mr. Uffelin from American churches for the Jamaica Baptist Mission, not one cent has ever reached the workers on that needy field. But now it is surely "adding insult to injury" to endeavour to alienate the sympathy of the American churches from the Jamaica work by reckless charges of Modernism.

Until further notice the only person appointed by the Jamaica Baptist Mission to receive funds for the work in the United States and Canada is the writer of this note.

T. I. STOCKLEY,  
337 Jarvis Street, Toronto 2, Canada.

# The Union Baptist Witness

These pages (14 and 15) are the Official organ of the Union of Regular Baptist Churches in Ontario and Quebec.  
337 Jarvis Street, Toronto, Canada.

W. GORDON BROWN, Editor.

*Communications for this department should be addressed direct to W. Gordon Brown, Box 502, Orangeville, Ont.*

## REVIVAL AT HARTFORD.

Pastor Robert Guthrie, of Courtland, under whose ministry such marvellous blessing was received on that field some months ago, is now assisting Pastor W. T. Farr, in revival services in the Hartford Baptist Church. For several weeks before the meetings, group prayer meetings were held on alternate afternoons in different homes, and they themselves proved to be times of refreshing from the Lord. At such a prayer meeting almost everyone present took part, and the spirit of expectancy was roused among the people. The meetings themselves began on Sunday, February 16th, and are continuing each night. Because of his strong and convincing Gospel messages, expounding the atoning work of our Lord Jesus Christ, Pastor Guthrie has won a large place in the affection of the Hartford people. Attendance and power is increasing from night to night. Last Friday afternoon, the evangelist, the local pastor, and some others held a meeting for children at the Public School; after the school was dismissed, a prayer meeting was continued, to which some twenty children remained. Thus far in the meetings eleven have professed conversion, most of them young people. Family salvation seems also to be in evidence, for a week ago a father, mother and sister, from a nearby village, together confessed Christ.

## BAPTISMS AT BENEFICENT.

Pastor Jules Danthey had the great joy, on Sunday, February 16th, of baptizing, by the courtesy of St. Paul's Baptist Church, seven men. Six months ago those who are now Baptists, were Roman Catholics. Another candidate was to have been baptized, but instead he had to watch by the deathbed of his dying child. More candidates are in preparation for a service a few weeks hence. Pastor Danthey says that the French-Canadians are beginning to have their eyes opened, and he begs our prayers for their emancipation from the galling yoke of Rome.

## ANNIVERSARY AT COURTRIGHT.

"The fifty-first anniversary of the Courtright Baptist Church, and the first anniversary service since our joining the Union, was held on February 16th. We counted ourselves very fortunate in securing Rev. W. E. Atkinson, our hard-working, efficient secretary of the Union, for this day. His strong, lucid sermons, morning and evening, were greatly enjoyed. In spite of the very icy roads, a

good congregation gathered in the morning, and a full house in the evening. Special singing by Mr. and Mrs. Howell, of Owen Sound, was greatly enjoyed by all. The church will long remember this visit of our secretary, and his messages will affect our work for good in the coming years."

C. E. SCOTT, Pastor.

## -RE-OPENING OF SOUTH ZORRA.

The following, taken from a recent edition of *The Daily Sentinel-Review*, of Woodstock-Ingersoll, is part of the history of the re-opening of the South Zorra Baptist Church:

"Travelling in sleighs, in more modern fashion in automobiles, or more humbly, on foot, worshippers from far and near gathered together on Sunday afternoon to celebrate the re-opening of South Zorra Baptist Church, which, in a few short months, has been transformed from four bare walls with a roof overhead to one of the most modern churches of its size in Oxford county.

The parish was fully represented at the ceremony and large groups from neighbouring congregations were also in attendance. The largest of these was a party of about forty from Woodstock, led by Rev. R. E. Jones of Oxford Street Baptist Church.

Not a single seat was left vacant, and before the service began, it was found necessary to carry chairs into the aisles to accommodate some of those who stood at the back.

The service was conducted by the Rev. W. F. Mesley, pastor of the parish, assisted by Mr. Jones, who read the lesson and in a brief message congratulated the congregation and their pastor on their achievement.

Four candidates for baptism made the necessary confession of faith and were immersed by the pastor.

Taking for his text: 'For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ', (1 Cor. 3, 11), Mr. Mesley urged the necessity for a stable foundation of religion in the individual."

## SCOTLAND'S SECOND YEAR.

The Regular Baptist Church of Scotland held their second annual meeting on January 3rd last. After dinner, reports were received. A number present testified to the blessing which has come to them through the spirit of love and enthusiasm among the members of the church, where Rev. T. L. White is the faithful pastor. The work of this year was commenced with a week of prayer, which, in spite of adverse weather conditions, was well attended. Some boys of the Sunday School professed conversion during 1929, and at one of the

prayer meetings just mentioned, a young man also confessed Christ as his Saviour and Lord.

## OAKWOOD'S MINISTRY.

Another annual meeting, this time in Oakwood Baptist Church, Toronto, where Rev. C. L. Rumball is pastor, showed an encouraging year. In all, some five thousand dollars was raised by all departments, including a considerable sum for missions. During the latter half of the year there was a marked increase in the power of the ministry of this church. The clerk says: "God has been blessing us with souls now and then, but we are looking forward to greater things this coming year."

## GOD BLESS OUR STUDENTS.

From north-west Toronto our news takes us to north-east Toronto, and we visit the Vaughan Road Community Mission, where Student George R. Dawe, of our Seminary, is in charge.

"The work of the mission has been steadily progressing during the past few months, perhaps not so much with respect to numbers, although these have not diminished in the least, but in the salvation of souls. We have organized a Sunday School, which meets in the morning; and a Gospel service is conducted each Sunday evening. Our work is largely a children's work; a number have professed conversion, and by their lives are showing that their 'profession' is a 'possession'. It has given us much joy of late to hear how the children have been witnessing for Christ in their homes, before unsaved loved ones.

"Since Christmas there has been less outward manifestation of the Lord's working, although the seed of the Word has been sown. Sunday last (February 16th), however, a group of about ten students came out from the Seminary to sing and give their testimonies. The mission hall was full, and after the message delivered by Brother Paul Abriel, three definitely took their stand for Christ. Two of the three were a brother and sister about twenty years of age, and the other, a younger girl."

## HERE AND THERE.

Student H. C. Slade has been supplying the First Baptist Church of Timmins. He says that he never saw such a company of praying men as there is in that church. The first Sunday he was there two professed faith in Christ.

The Verdun Baptist Church, where Rev. C. H. Leggett is pastor, are preparing for advance along building lines.

On Sunday, February 16th, one professed conversion at the evening service in the North Bay Baptist Mission, after a Gospel message by Pastor J. Forrester.

Recent supplies at the Alton Baptist Church have been Students J. Fullard, C. McGrath, and G. R. Dawe. Student Evan Jones preached in Orangeville last Sunday morning.

Attendance at the services of Collier Street Baptist Church, Barrie, has shown a marked increase of late.

Before a full theatre at the evening service of the Central Baptist Church, London, ten professed conversion, following a piercing sermon from Pastor James McGinlay.

\* \* \* \*

**REVIVAL AT FAIRBANK.**

The tide of revival has risen at Fairbank, Toronto, under the ministry of Pastor F. Holliday. Last Sunday saw 208 at Sunday School, the largest attendance yet at a regular session. At the evening service, four, from a packed house, professed Christ. Pastor Holliday is commencing a series of sixteen special services, with lectures on the book of Revelation, from March 2nd to 16th.

\* \* \* \*

**PERISHING FAITH.**

The following clipping from the February number of *The Fundamentalist*, being *The Journal of the Wesley Bible Union*, of England, will be of interest to all.

"The Boston Circuit Wesleyan Church Record lies on the desk here. In it the Rev. C. H. Hulbert is reported as saying that 'Unless Methodism received a revival within the next ten years, half our chapels would be closed and Methodist Union would not save us'. But no hint is given that Mr. Hulbert had the temerity to put his finger on the spot and declare the source of the ruin. In another part of the issue, it is recorded that in one of the largest villages the Bible Society Meeting was advertised in both the Parish Church and the Wesleyan; one of the secretaries and the deputation arrived: but the audience consisted of one young girl. Of course it is not merely Wesleyan Methodism that is in question: would that it were! Deep interest in the Bible and the Faith are perishing in all the Churches."

\* \* \* \*

**PICTURES OF LIBERIA.**

Our Union has a fine set of coloured lantern slides, which may be used by any organization of our churches applying for the same. Miss G. Green, our office secretary, will present them at the Runnymede Rd. Baptist Church on Wednesday evening, March 5th.

\* \* \* \*

**A CALL TO PRAYER.**

Pastors of our Union Church in the Toronto district, together with members of the Executive of our Union, are meeting in the building of the Toronto Baptist Seminary, next Monday, March 3rd, beginning at 10 a.m. Should this not also be a suggestion to other groups of churches as well as to individual churches to set aside a special time of prayer for

the Lord's guidance in, and blessing upon, the work which we are seeking to carry on to His glory?

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**PICTURES REQUESTED.**

In its endeavour to get together a good lantern lecture on the work of our Union throughout these home provinces, our office is asking that pastors and workers in our churches, especially those somewhat remote from Toronto, should send in photographs and snapshots of their groups of people, and also of other matters of interest in connection with their work. Co-operation in this will be much appreciated.

\* \* \* \*

**BLESSING AT CALGARY.**

"The Lord's blessing is being richly bestowed on us here. Souls have been saved since my coming here, and we have our second baptismal service next Sunday. With these we have about eighteen ready for the right hand of fellowship. Six of these are by baptism. The Sunday services are all well attended, the building being well filled both morning and evening. The Bible School is nearing the 300 mark in attendance (297 last Sunday). The mid-week meetings are also well attended and a goodly spirit manifest in each. The Young People's meeting is over 70 in attendance, and the prayer meeting this week was over 75 present. At present our handicap is the size of our building. It looks as though we will have to make some better arrangement very soon if the work continues to grow in any measure of His blessing."

MORLEY R. HALL, Pastor.

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**HOW REGULAR BAPTISTS ARE MADE.**

The Northern Baptist Convention was organized some years ago by men moved by the Modernistic slant, and evidently with the cherished purpose that that which now exists should be accomplished. The State Conventions have become subordinate to a centralized power, and every one of them exercising a control so extensive that Baptist independence and principles have been largely buried out of sight. Real Baptists are made only by intelligence and conviction. Individuals in pedit-Baptist denominations are bound hand and foot by Denominational authority and no man dares say that "aught of the things which he possesses is his own." This was the thing that was attempted by the organizers of the oligarchy known as the Northern Baptist Convention, and this is the fond dream of the man-made machine in the State of Michigan.

It is a good time for education. Baptists of Michigan ought to equip themselves with a history of what religious freedom has cost. There are books describing the martyrdom of the millions who have suffered in the interests of liberty. These should be purchased and read. There are books and leaflets which describe the struggles through which Baptists have come in these United

States of America to their present possessions. All of these things should be called to mind. The Bible is a Baptist book. The New Testament begins with John the Baptist, and Baptists have been in the limelight ever since. Some of them like John have been beheaded, many of them have been drowned and burned at the stake, but all of the sufferings of the past were used in the Providence of God to advance the great cause of Christian truth.

One of the principal reasons why professing Christians are getting away from Baptist principles is that they are getting away from the Bible. If the Bible is lightly esteemed Baptist principles will die out. Regular Baptists will have to see to it that the people of this generation are educated to the point of knowing what Baptists have done and what their principles really are. It will take time and patience, but it is a crying need and must be done. Just as the members of our churches are overwhelmed with the Denominational idea, just so we shall get away from the liberties which are the Divine inheritance of those who have been made free in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is enough for any individual that he belongs to Christ, and enough for any Church that they are under His authority. Baptists need no overlords going about among their churches accompanied by their lawyers. Evidently the executive secretary who thus undertakes to arm himself with authority would be delighted if there was some power to confer upon him the authority of the archbishop and the cardinal. Being destitute, just for the present at least, of this particular equipment he undertakes to supply the lack by carrying along a lawyer. As a matter of economy in railroad fare it might be better for the Michigan Baptist State Board to give the executive secretary the cardinal's authority, and by this means keep the lawyer at home.

It is a great joy to some of us to know that there are Regular Baptists in Michigan who deplore the disgrace that has come upon us all by this unbaptistic procedure. The apostle tells us that "in the last days perilous times will come," and we cannot but think that a part of the perils may be manifest in the beginning of an effort to rob Baptists of their property and their liberty.—*Baptist Temple News* of Feb. 22, 1930.

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**WINDSOR.**

To-day's mail brings news of blessing on Mr. Fraser's ministry at Windsor. There is a unity among the people, and the presence of God is manifest in every service. Six were baptized last Tuesday evening, and others await baptism. We covet the prayers of our readers that revival fires may spread throughout the churches of the new Convention.

## Baptist Bible Union Lesson Leaf

Vol. V.

No. 1

REV. ALEX. THOMSON, Editor.

Lesson 11

March 16th, 1930

First Quarter.

### THE JEWISH REMNANT AND THE MARTYRS.

Lesson Text: Revelation, Chapter 7.

Golden Text: "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."—Rev. 7:14.

#### I. THE SEALED REMNANT (vs. 1-8).

(a) Two distinct scenes come before us in this chapter, one relating to the earth, the other to heaven. The first describes the sealing of the Jewish remnant; the second, the blessedness of the dead in Christ. Both are described from the heavenly viewpoint. In the opening verses four angels are seen standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth; and to them there is given the command, "Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads." The time of this scene is still future, and will take place during the period of the great tribulation. Such a period is described by our Lord (Matt. 24:21), and will occur just prior to His glorious revelation to the world at His second coming. It will be a time of great suffering and judgment for the wicked, but not without mercy for the Lord's ancient people, Israel, who are specially concerned during that time. It is characteristic of God's judgments in the past that He has shown mercy to those who have yielded to Him, as in the garden of Eden to our first parents when He prevented them from living for ever in sin (Gen. 3:24); as in the days of Noah, when eight persons were saved in the ark (Gen. 7:7); in the case of Lot, saved from the destruction of Sodom (Gen. 19:16, 17); and of Caleb and Joshua, permitted to enter the promised land when all the other adults were forbidden to do so on account of their sin (Num. 14:30). The scene before us implies a merciful interposition of God in withholding the destroying winds of judgment until His servants were sealed in their foreheads. It should be clearly noted that the final judgment will be without mercy for all present before the great white throne will be unrepentant. Justice will be shown to each one, however, and the degree of punishment meted out will be in accordance with the guilt (Matt. 11:20-24).

(b) It is characteristic of God in His relationship to man that in some special way He sets His own apart for Himself. The first man was made in the likeness of his Maker (Gen. 1:27), and although it is true that Adam's descendants remain in a measure this likeness, yet we are conscious that something has been lost through the fall, and that man in general is not what God intended him to be. Seth and his immediate descendants were marked out in some way as

the followers of Jehovah (Gen. 4:26), and Noah and his family (Gen. 6:8); but it is when we come to Abraham and his seed that the work of God is found very clear in the rite of circumcision (Gen. 17:9-13). Each male Israelite was set aside thus as being peculiarly the Lord's own. It is interesting also to note the mark of the blood on the lintel and doorposts of the homes of the Israelites in Egypt (Ex. 12:7), and the scarlet cord mark in Rahab's window (Josh. 2:18). In the Christian era we are informed each child of God is sealed by the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:13), and the possession of the individual by this Spirit so influences the life that it is quite evident to all that such a person is one of God's own peculiar people (Titus 2:14). In the tribulation period the special remnant of the Lord's people will bear a conspicuous mark so that all with whom they associate will know they are the servants of God and under His care.

(c) Various conjectures have been made concerning the identity of this sealed remnant, but it seems perfectly clear just who are meant. It states these servants of God are "of all the tribes of the children of Israel", and then the names of the tribes are given. There is no reason for reading into this statement any other than the plain meaning observed on the surface. Gentile Christians are not here referred to, but an elect remnant of Israel. It is of interest to note the substitution of the names of Joseph and Levi for those of Dan and Ephraim, an explanation of which may be found in the history of the latter two. Note also the significance of the remnant in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah (Ezra 9:8), and that in the present age (Rom. 11:5). God has not forever deserted His people however, for though they are at present set aside (Rom. 11:25), and scattered throughout the nations (Zech. 7:14), they will some day be gathered again to their own land, there to enjoy peace and prosperity under their Messiah (Ezek. 37:20-28). It is well to keep this in mind while pointing out God's judgment upon them (Jer. 30:7), and the sealing of the remnant from among them.

#### II. THE HEAVENLY HOST (vs. 9-17).

(a) We come now to a scene in heaven. John says he "beheld, and lo a great multitude which no man could number of all nations and kindred and people and tongues, stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands." And they ascribe praise unto God and the Lamb for their salvation. In these words there is described a great thanksgiving service in heaven attended by an innumerable host who are fittingly clothed for the occasion in white robes, symbolical of purity, and having the symbol of joy in their hands. The saints on earth have much for which to praise God, for salvation is an ever-present experience, but when the trials of life are over and they are translated into the gloryland, their joy will know no bounds, and hallelujahs will ring forth from their lips. It is no wonder the angels joined in this praise-service. They felt the happiness of the scene, and realized deeply its great significance. Such multitudes were

present, not simply because they lived good moral lives while upon earth, but on account of the work of the Lamb; therefore they ascribe unto God, "Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving." All unite in the wondrous theme of ascribing unto God all the glory for the salvation of men. We should exercise very great care now that we give unto God all the glory for any work wrought in us by His Spirit, and through us by the same source of power.

(b) John evidently is not certain as to the identity of this multitude, and when approached by one of the elders concerning this (v. 13), said, "Sir, thou knowest" (v. 14). Their identity is then revealed to him by his questioner: "These are they", said he, "which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Two things are here stated: first, they came out of great tribulation. This in a measure, could be said of all the children of God, for we are informed that in this world we shall have tribulation; though we are encouraged with the statement that our Lord has overcome the world (John 16:33). But of some it is especially true that they have suffered great tribulation, and it would seem some such class was referred to. The second thing stated concerning them is that they have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb. This gives the reason for their presence before the throne. It speaks of their purity and preparation, and emphasizes the blessedness and significance of the work of Christ. No one will ever reach heaven who is not indebted to the blood of the Lamb for such a privilege. This scene ought to convince the proclaimers of a bloodless gospel of the error of their teaching. There is not really a gospel, for it will never save a soul from sin, or lead a sinner to heaven. It is equally incapable of both, and is fit only to do the devil's work of deceiving and damning souls. It is religion as opposed to Christianity, and profession as opposed to possession of Christ. Emphasis ought to be laid then upon the blood of the Lamb and the necessity for all of securing this cleansing.

(c) After referring to the cleansing of the heavenly host in the blood of the Lamb, the elder gives further particulars concerning them, stating first the nature of their service. They serve God day and night in His temple. Heaven will not be a place of idleness: each one will have something to do; but all will pertain to the worship of God. We must be careful here not to be idlers, for no matter where we may be, God has something for us to do. "And he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them." Who can express the blessedness of such fellowship? It is joy unspeakable here to be conscious of the divine presence, but what must it be when we reach the very centre of His presence and see Him face to face? The condition of those saints is then described in a few words: They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb shall feed them". Such a description implies complete satisfaction, with no lack, no sorrow, no care.